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CABINET.

THE CORONATION OATH.

OPINION

OF THE LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR

AND THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.

Since the form of the Coronation Oath is laid down by statute is cannot be altered without statutory authority. But it has always been recognised that if a statute is passed altering the constitutional position of this country in such a way as to render the words of the original Oath no longer applicable, that Act may be treated as impliedly authorising, and indeed requiring, a corresponding alteration in the wording of the Oath. This procedure was accepted both in the case of the Act of Union with Scotland and the Act of Union with Ireland. In our opinion the Statute of Westminster does alter the constitutional position of this country in relation to the Dominions in such a way as to render the existing words of the Coronation Oath inapplicable. It follows that we think an alteration should be made in the wording of the Oath so as to give effect to the alteration effected by the Statute of Westminster and that that Statute may properly be treated as an authority for making such an alteration. The exact wording of the revised Oath is a matter for careful consideration; the revision must be limited to what is necessary to give effect to the alteration in the constitutional position.

No doubt we shall be informed of the words proposed to be substituted before they are finally approved.

(Signed). HAILSHAM.
C.
" D.B. SOMERVELL.

" T.J. O'CONNOR.

House of Lords, S.W.1.

12th June, 1936.